

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

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R 090816Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1975

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1988

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, RP

SUBJ: DE LA TORRE CASE

REF: MANILA 1859

1. ON FEB 7 EMBOFF DISCUSSED DE LA TORRE CASE WITH MEMBER OF RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS DETAINEES COMMITTEE (AMRSP) WHO PROVIDED HIM WITH NOTES ON HER CONVERSATIONS WITH DE LA TORRE'S MOTHER. MRS. DE LA TORRE AND FAMILY MEMBERS OF OTHER FOURTEEN DETAINEES MET WITH SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ENRILE ON FEB 6. HE DENIED THEIR REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF PRISONERS OR HOUSE ARREST FOR TWO NURSING MOTHERS IN THE GROUP. HE PROMISED TO CONFER WITH PC CHIEF M.G. FIDEL RAMOS ABOUT POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF GROUP FROM CAMP OLIVAS TO METRO MANILA AREA BUT SAID THEY COULD NOT BE ACCOMMODATED IN YOUTH REHABILITATION CENTER IN FORT BONIFACIO IN ANY CASE.

2. ACCORDING TO MRS. DE LA TORRE, HER SON'S HUNGER STRIKE BEGAN JAN 3. IT WAS INTERRUPTED AND RESUMED JAN 6. HE AND HIS FELLOW PRISONERS ARE TAKING TWO SALTEEN CRACKERS, WATER, SALT AND SMALL PIECE OF CANDY EACH DAY. FROM JAN 6 TO 17, GROUP HAD VISITORS (IMMEDIATE FAMILY) BUT VISITATION PRIVILEGES CANCELLED DURING "RED ALERT" FROM JAN 17 TO FEB 2. AFTER FEB 2 FAMILIES COMMENTED THAT PRISONERS LOOKED

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EXTREMELY PALE AND SHOWED SIGNS OF SIGNIFICANT WEIGHT

LOSS. MRS. DE LA TORRE SAID HER SON (WHO IS KEPT IN CELL BY HIMSELF AND WAS PERMITTED TO EXERCISE ONLY FOR A FEW DAYS BEFORE AMNESTY TEAM VISIT) MUST NOW DECIDE WHETHER TO CONTINUE WITH HUNGER STRIKE.

3. EMBOFF RAISED DE LA TORRE CASE WITH SOLICITOR GENERAL MENDOZA ON FEB 7. NOTING INTEREST IN OFFICES OF SENATOR CRANSTON AND CONGRESSMAN FRASER, EMBOFF ASKED WHEN SUPREME COURT WOULD RULE ON QUESTION OF BAIL (REFTTEL). MENDOZA SAID HE EXPECTED DECISION WOULD COME IN A FEW WEEKS. HE THOUGHT IT SIGNIFICANT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WISHES TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE TRAIL WHILE DEFENSE WAS PUSHING FOR DELAY.

4. COMMENT: FAMILIES OF DE LA TORRE AND OTHER PRISONERS WANT THEIR RELATIVES IN MANILA AREA SINCE IT REQUIRES AT LEAST THREE HOURS TO MAKE TRIP BY BUS TO AND FROM CAMP OLIVAS EACH DAY. ONE SUSPECTS THEIR LAWYER (SENATOR DIOKNO) AND SYMPATHIZERS ALSO BELIEVE THEY WOULD GET MORE MILEAGE OUT OF THEIR HUNGER STRIKE IF THEY WERE IN MANILA. THIS IS WHY GOVERNMENT RELUCTANT TO TRANSFER THEM. AMRSP SOURCE FEELS AQUINO AND LOPEZ/OSMENA EXPERIENCES HAVE PROBABLY KILLED HUNGER STRIKE AS USEFUL WEAPON. SHE DOUBTS DE LA TORRE IS READY TO BECOME A MARTYR AND, SINCE HIS FELLOW PRISONERS ARE MOSTLY YOUNG FAMILY MEN, IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THEY WILL GIVE UP THE STRIKE. WE SHALL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.  
SULLIVAN

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